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ABSTRACT

Motivational devices are useful in content-area reading because the content load of most content textbooks is so extensive that few if any students can be expected to understand all that an author intends to communicate. Many students who are inexperienced with the subject matter are unable to read the assignments independently. The recognition of two general factors will help the teacher to establish instructional purposes in content-area reading: the idea to be discovered, and the reading process to be applied. The student's clear understanding of the purpose for which he or she is reading will be valuable. Suggested activities which will be helpful in assisting readers to process content-area materials include the following: inform the reader in advance of the ideas to be discovered in order to establish a cognitive set for reading; set short-term goals; and use an advance organizer, positive reinforcement, adjusted reading level, structured overview, paragraph processing, mapping, and webbing. (DF)

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Motivation in Content Reading

Motivation is that which gives direction and intensity to behavior. Direction implies selection from the many possible variations which exist in purposes, aims or goals. Reaching out to a particular challenge in a particular way suggests to an onlooker the participant is motivated toward a given task. Motivation is an inference made from observed behavior and as such is difficult to measure. Nevertheless an attempt at a goal by a person implies motivation to learn something about that goal. Goals may be instigated by an idea, need, emotion or organic state but come from within the individual not from without.

Intensity implies variation in the degree of effort or energy expended to attain the goal. One is regarded as highly motivated if movement toward the task is vigorous and forceful. Any lessor degree of effort suggests less motivation. Intensity can vary from great activity toward to great activity away from.[1] Movement away from is generally regarded as negative motivation.

While there are unlimited numbers of settings in which we could examine motivation and its effects there are four which seem to have applicability to motivation in content reading. These areas include 1) motivation to learn, 2) motivation in an educational setting, 3) motivation to learn in school and 4) motivation of students in a classroom situation. Within the classroom it is easy to refine the setting to content reading in science, American history, English, home economics, etc. Let us examine these four settings in some detail.

Motivation to learn is the broadest construct. Motivation to learn

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can take place anywhere in the environment where the organism is stimulated to do something - change behavior. Students may be highly motivated to learn in the peer group, on the job or on vacation. Teachers are familiar with the significant minority of students who are highly motivated to learn but choose to learn away from school. Many self made men point with pride to the fact that most of their learning did not take place in school. Sometimes, they add, much to the chagrin of educators that despite school they were able to accomplish this or that.

Motivation to learn in an educational setting is different in that it is somewhat narrower in range. While an educational setting may exist anywhere in the environment, it involves some established setting where limits are placed on the kind of learning which can take place. Hanging around the speed shop or volunteering for a political campaign are examples of motivation in an educational setting. In these instances the responsibilities of the speed shop and the political campaign are clear and a student who associates himself or herself with this setting is likely to learn a great deal about cars or politics.

Motivation to learn in school is an even narrower construct. Even though the number and kinds of activities engaged in schools has steadily increased over the years, it is still rather clear that certain kinds of activities are likely to take place in schools. These activities when repeated in some planned sequence are likely to lead to learning on the part of students. Sometimes outstanding performance is demonstrated on the athletic field, in developing the yearbook or in editing the school newspaper and in some cases this outstanding performance is contrasted with rather mediocre classroom performance.

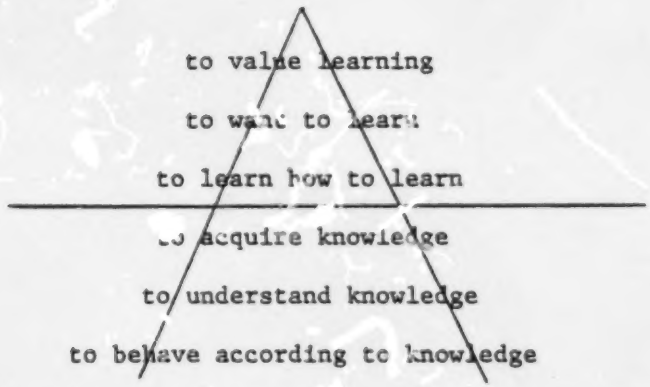
Motivation of students in a classroom situation is the narrowest of the four constructs. Traditionally our classrooms have stressed the academic achievement of students yet other very important outcomes are associated with classroom instruction. These include the nurturing of curiosity, creativity and personal development. It may be that these personal attitudes and behaviors have more to do with ultimate success or life fulfillment than academic knowledge. Both outcomes, academic achievement and personal development, should emerge in classrooms. Normally they do and tend to support one another quite effectively in a spirit of harmony. Yet, sometimes conflict between academic achievement outcomes and personal fulfillment needs does exist.

Conflict between school and student often results from a student's lack of understanding or acceptance of the notion that schools have purposes too. The teacher as agent of the school is charged with the responsibility of helping students set direction in learning efforts. These school purposes are often referred to as goals, aims or objectives. They can be arranged in a hierarchy and can be regarded as process or product goals. The hierarchy looks like this:

The Basic Purpose of Schools

is to

Help Students Learn



Knowledge goals seem to be more concrete than learning goals in that they are more easily measured and assessed. As we move up the hierarchy examining goals each becomes more and more personal to the learner and measuring progress towards each goal becomes more and more subjective. We tend in schools to measure that which is more easily measured. Thus the more subjective learning goals would not be measured as often or as effectively as the knowledge goals. This seems true despite the contention often made that learning goals are more important than knowledge goals. Perhaps this explains why some students who value learning may not behave according to knowledge. It may be the knowledge goals set by the school are inconsistent with the learning goals of the individual.

It would seem that our task as teachers of reading in content areas would be to bring the very personal subjective learning goals of the student into harmony with the more objective knowledge goals of the school. This we know is no easy task but efforts towards this end need

to be continued in an effort to improve the reading ability of students. Let's ask four questions about motivation to read. The answers to these questions may be helpful in planning meaningful activities which encourage reading in the content areas and encourage the harmony mentioned above.

What Motivates Students to Read?

The Need to Read[2]

In our predominantly literate highly technical society the need to read is self evident. Reading is a way of calling up stored knowledge. Reading permits man to examine experience and rearrange it. Through reading students can separate themselves from their experiences instead of just identifying with them. Students can stand apart from the print, reconsider it, analyze it and evaluate it.[3] The oral tradition does not permit reconsideration, analysis and evaluation at least to the same degree that reading does. Countless times students find themselves in situations where the need to respond to printed symbols is pervasive. Few young children need to be convinced of this. The vast majority of young children come to kindergarten ready and willing to learn in school. Somehow this motivation is lost as some students advance through the grades. The issue of why this happens is a major concern of this paper.

Imitation of Models Who Are Mature Readers

Where teachers have incorporated Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) into their programs, results have been very satisfactory. This technique seems to be valuable for all ages and socioeconomic backgrounds. Allowing class time to read books students have chosen themselves provides the time students need to process and reprocess print. Certainly the modeling

provided by the teacher as he/she reads his/her own choice of books is reinforcing to the student.

Entertainment

In schools today we have too often lost sight of the entertainment value of reading. Literature by its very nature is uplifting and this uplifting is usually more readily apparent when the student reads materials that are self chosen. Entertaining often implies easy to read and understand, enjoyable for its own sake and intrinsically rewarding. Yet schools and teachers pressed with accountability and competency standards have often had to look beyond this concept of entertainment. In this rush to build skills and competencies the pure joy of reading can be lost. This can have dire consequences for motivation.

Need for Novelty

The student is naturally curious and given opportunities to satisfy this curiosity will pursue them. Reading is one good way to satisfy this curiosity for when we read we read a repository of other people's experiences. While there is no sure formula authors have successfully recorded experiences which satisfy the curiosity of students of adolescent age.

Need to Know

The development of knowledge is not only an objective of schools--as was discussed earlier--but a personal motive of students. The search for knowledge is continuous. From examining our environment to the processing of print we can see evidence of student's motivation to read. Even a poor reader clearly demonstrates this need to know when caught in the back of the classroom reading a salacious book.

Feeling of Accomplishment

The pleasure or value associated with reading may come from the "doing" of the reading. Often we think of this as intrinsic motivation and it refers to the value associated with the activity. Manipulation and exploration of ideas while reading may offer satisfaction in and of themselves. Students may pursue reading activities as ends in themselves feeling a sense of accomplishment after completing the reading. Unfortunately some students never experience the tremendous feeling of elation as they finish the last page of a fascinating book. This is regrettable and preventable.

What Motivates Students to Continue Reading?

Desire for Knowledge

Knowledge gained through reading means freedom to be a more complete person. Reading opens access to new ideas and with these new ideas comes freedom. The reader is free to expand his own understandings as he/she becomes a productive member of society. As was suggested earlier the need to know leads to the development of knowledge. The desire for knowledge can become its own motivation. The more we know about some things the more we want to know.

Vicarious Experiences Which Satisfy

Experiences with books can take a student anywhere in time and space. From the community the base expands to other lands on other continents. From fantasy and science fiction to realism with social, political and economic concerns. Through teacher guidance and direction students obtain the emotional lift available through books. Content reading involving use of paperbacks and magazines can support and reinforce the readings in required texts.

Solutions to Interpersonal Problems

The junior and senior high student is faced with many personal problems. Bibliotherapy is a concept which could prove valuable to classroom teachers. In "book therapy" the student is encouraged to read a book or books where the character or characters have faced similar problems. Often a resolution to a problem becomes clear in the mind of the student through this approach. Students will seek out literature to help them with their personal problems when teachers suggest the concept to them. There is a feeling of comfort in knowing that others had such a problem and were able to resolve it.

Establishment of Sex Roles

Relationships between boys and girls are of central importance as students move through adolescence. Striking contrast can be found in the ways they find to identify with one another. Some students are well liked by both sexes and seem to convey a feeling of warmth and understanding in interactions in and out of the classroom. Others find this a turbulent time when conflict and controversy surround seemingly every act. The transition from childhood to adolescence so dependent upon establishing healthy sex role identity is known to every classroom teacher.

Aesthetic Experiences Which Deepen Appreciation

The sensitive adolescent will continue reading experiences which foster feelings about the beauty of nature. Sensitive and responsive the teenager will develop an appreciation of all that is beautiful. There is so much we can recommend for reading in this regard an effort to summarize it here would be presumptuous. Traditional literature

including myths and legends join with adventure, humor, biography, and fiction. This can be a welcome change from the realism that has tended to dominate adolescent literature in the last ten years.

What Motivates Avoidance of Reading?

Unfortunately a significant minority of students in our secondary schools today avoid reading whenever possible. To some extent this can be prevented if the reasons for this avoidance are understood by teachers. Here are some contributing factors.

Inadequate Reading Skills.

Many secondary school students cannot adequately process the content in their textbooks. They read two or more years below grade level and efforts to be successful with print materials have been frustrated. Continued lack of success leads to refusal to even try. No way has yet been found to improve reading if a student won't try. Reading skills are developmental and practice is essential for mastery.

Punishment for Lack of Achievement.

A frown, a caustic remark or a failing grade are all ways that our schools have found to remind students they don't measure up. There are other serious consequences for students when feelings of inadequacy prevail. If reading is painful, students will avoid reading. So many examples of this are available in our culture that it seems no longer debatable. Punishment can lead to avoidance of reading.

Content Unimportant to the Reader.

Students read to meet their needs. Some of the content that is found in our regular textbooks today is bound to turn off even a good reader. Out of date materials and books which ignore student interests

often will not motivate the sophisticated learner of today. While relevance to the reader cannot be the only criterion for reading neither can it be ignored for long. Teachers know this and want printed material with which students can identify. Unfortunately resources are not always available to respond to these teacher/student needs.

Distraction of Other Activities.

Over the years we have defended the student's right to be active in the learning process. This defense has been so successful that often the need to be quiet has been ignored. This need to be quiet is just as pervasive as the need for activity. Perhaps a balance of these two is needed in our content classrooms.

What Motivates Students to Read in the Content Areas?

Content can be defined simply as subject matter. Content reading then is reading the details, concepts and generalizations of a particular school subject. The concept load of most content textbooks is so extensive that few if any students can be expected to understand all that an author intends to communicate about the subject being studied. Many students who have very limited experiences with the subject matter being studied are not able to read independently the assignments in the text. Thus there are certain motivational devices which give direction and intensity to student reading efforts. These devices include:

Setting a clear purpose

Invaluable to the reader is a clear understanding of the purpose for which he/she is reading. Two broad areas help to establish purposes: a) the idea to be discovered; b) the reading process to be applied.[4] Informing the reader in advance of the reading concerning the ideas

found in the reading helps to establish a cognitive set for the reading. This cognitive set can help to improve comprehension. The reading process or rate of reading varies depending upon the purpose for reading. Fast reading as in skimming and scanning meets certain needs. Careful reading of main ideas and details permits reflection and evaluation of the ideas presented.

Short Term Goals

Since the concept load of most expository texts is so extensive it is advisable to set short term goals when making assignments for students. "Locate the sentence or paragraph which best describes the state of mind Mr. Robertson was in when he crossed the field." "Summarize the three reasons given on page 292 for the miner's discontent." "Compare your feelings when angry with a friend with the feelings expressed in your book on page 280."

Success

Notions of positive reinforcement have been well reported in reading journals. Success is one of the best forms of this reinforcement. It encourages the student to pursue reading in all of its ramifications. The success oriented student is more likely to approach reading with anticipation. Past experience has revealed that effort put forth in the reading process has been worthwhile and further effort is likely to be just as successful. For the student who has not known success, patience and understanding are needed on the part of the teacher.

Adjusted Reading Level

Many teachers report that content textbooks often are too difficult to read for many students. A search for materials at varying reading

difficulty levels is worth the effort it takes. With the materials revolution which took place in the 1960's more good reading material is available than ever before. Unfortunately budgets have been so restricted in the last few years that school boards have been reluctant to purchase new materials. This is a problem which educators and citizens must face if teachers are to utilize multi-level reading materials.

Motivation in the content classroom involving setting purposes, short term goals, success, and adjusted reading level are all necessary as teachers attempt to meet the diverse individual needs of students. The following activities have been helpful to classroom teachers in meeting these needs. All call for large and small group instruction. Secondary teachers have reported that small group instruction while desirable often is difficult to organize. These activities call for a minimum of organization and allow teachers plenty of time to visit each small group as the group pursues objectives.

Motivating activities may take place before, during or after silent reading. All activities are designed to enhance comprehension. As you read about the activities below consider their usefulness as pre-reading, during-reading and post-reading devices. Be mindful of whether the activity will contribute to better comprehension of expository reading material.

Advance Organizer

The advance organizer as originally conceptualized by David Ausubel is any idea, image, recollection, abstraction or available pattern prepared by the teacher.[5] This organizer is presented to the reader before reading. It can take the form of a statement, a descriptive

paragraph, a question, a demonstration or even a film. The organizer establishes a mind set for the learning to follow. It is presented at a high level of abstraction and subsumes the principles involved in the reading.

Organizers come in two types: the expository organizer and the comparative organizer. The expository organizer provides ideational anchorage for completely unfamiliar material.

Today we will introduce the short story. There are different kinds of short stories and they are written for different purposes. One of the first things to do when reading a short story is to decide on the purpose the author had in mind in writing the story. Then read in close communion with the author as he travels on toward his purpose.

As you read, note the incidents one by one, respond to the emotional atmosphere, watch out for the struggle, and be ready for the outcome. In a nutshell these are reading procedures which apply to stories in general. Some of the more specialized skills will be discussed in connection with the short stories that follow.

The comparative organizer is designed to integrate new concepts with familiar concepts.

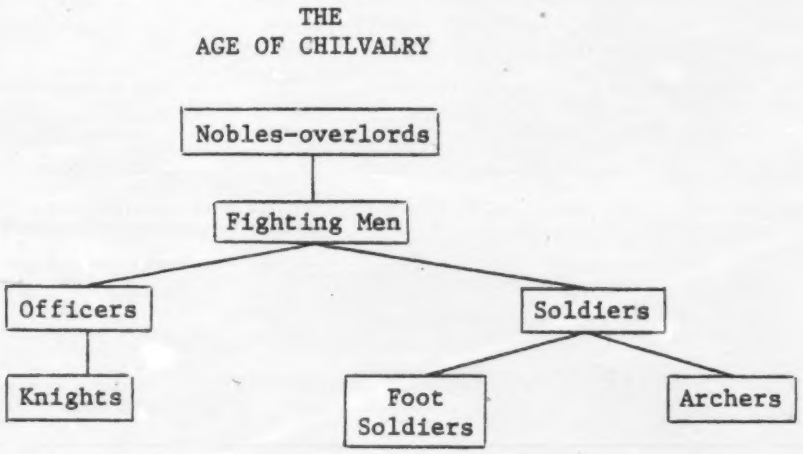
We studied earlier the three basic ingredients of a good story as setting, plot and character. In most stories these are balanced and integrated so effectively the reader is not aware of any one of them as predominant. While this is generally true, it is possible for any one of these elements to be dominant in a story and for one or both of the others to be greatly reduced or absent. The next

selection will portray a colorful setting and neither plot nor character plays any important role at all.

After reading the short stories referred to above the students can be grouped in threes, fours or fives to discuss the story based on the concepts pre-set by the organizer. It is important to remember that an advance organizer might precede reading shorter passages as well. Even a page of print could be preceded by an advance organizer. The a/o's can be typed with large type and presented on a transparency.

Structured Overview

Barron proposed the structured overview as a way of preparing the mind set of the learner in an effort to teach vocabulary.[6] Like the advance organizer the structured overview is normally presented prior to the reading of the passage. The key vocabulary and concepts are presented in advance of reading. This visual aid helps the reader to see relationships as they develop in the reading passage.



After reading the text the students can be grouped to discuss the relationship which exists between the concepts. Is there a generali-

zation to be drawn? In the case of the Age of Chilvalry there is. Over a period of time some nobles became more powerful than others. Since attack from other ruling men was frequent, it was often necessary to join forces. Where several noblemen joined forces the most powerful was usually named King. Thus the strength of the large group could often repel invasion from outside.

Paragraph Processing

Another motivating activity involves students in the processing and reprocessing of paragraphs to show the relationships of the ideas presented. In expository writing the paragraphs vary in length, function and importance. Helping students make decisions about important paragraphs can aid comprehension considerably. The following paragraphs are representative.

Helps to continuity	programmatic paragraphs	state author's intention
	transitional paragraphs	help the reader to see the connection between ideas
	summarizing paragraphs	recapitulate important points
Helps to effectiveness	introductory paragraphs	set the stage for reading
	one sentence paragraphs	set off a statement for emphasis
	incidental paragraphs	leaven the writing with digressions
The essence of text-book writing	expository paragraphs	present and develop important ideas

Paragraph processing should be introduced in large group instruction and once the students understand the various kinds of paragraphs small groups can be effective. The teacher presents on transparency the following:

p. 27, par. 3	a transitional paragraph which will help you see the connection between the two theories of magnetism
p. 28, par. 1	the summary paragraph for pages 27 and 28
p. 29, par. 2,3,4	the important ideas helpful in understanding magnetic fields
p. 31, para. 3	the author's intention is stated

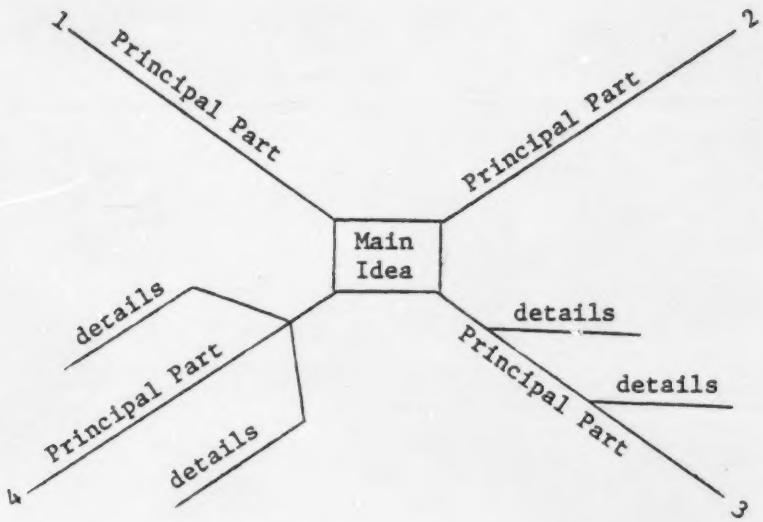
Paragraph processing can be useful where the text is difficult for many students. It is possible to divide the group into those that the teachers help and those that can read independently without paragraph processing.

Mapping

Students can be aided to perceive organization and relationship through mapping. Hanf introduced this concept some years ago and students find it very useful.[7] A verbal picture of ideas is organized prior to the reading. This is done by identifying the main idea of the reading and drawing triangle, square or pentagon around the main idea to show the number of principal parts. Next, the students categorize the reading and write on the board the names of the principal parts. Lastly, in small groups the class adds details after reading the text silently and discussing the various interpretations.

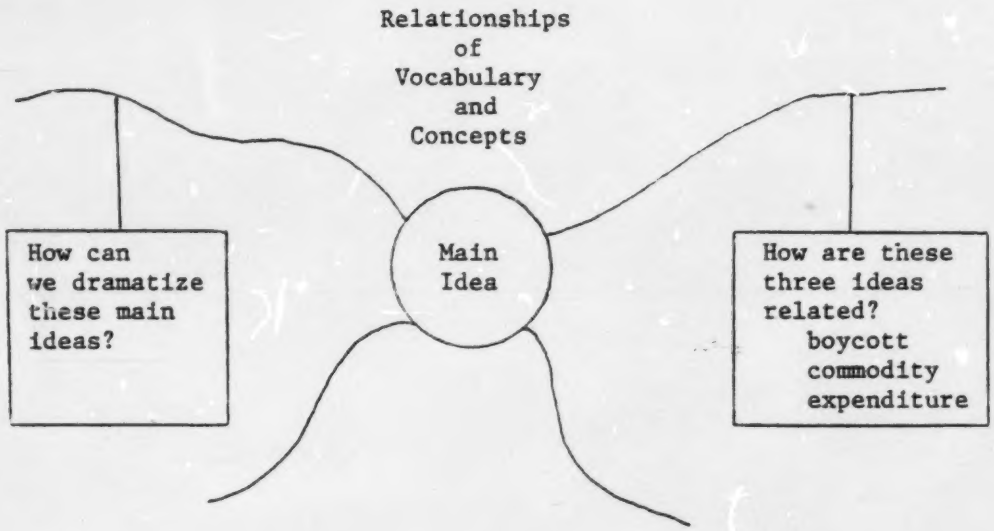
After completion of the map small groups can report to the class as a whole and a discussion of the various interpretation can begin. As

students become more familiar with this technique the teacher can play less of a directive role.



Webbing

Webbing is both a teaching tool and an enrichment procedure. As a teaching tool students can be shown the various relationships which exist between the parts. Small groups can be organized to develop new webs, complete partial webs or modify webs in keeping with group interpretation. Huck introduces ways the web can be used for enrichment.[8] Webbing is probably more flexible than mapping yet both can be used to tap the creativity and originality of students.



Webs can be constructed to help students see relationships. They need not take the form you see above. The important consideration is whether the web helps the students to conceptualize the reading.

Location

Another activity which promises to motivate students in content reading is the location strategy. Location sharpens the interpretive skills of readers. It can be best utilized with the team partner approach to grouping.[9] The class members skim a section of text until they find two or three major ideas. These ideas are recorded on the chalkboard. Then the class is grouped as team partners for a search of the text to find supporting details. Each partnership selects two or three ideas for verification. Within a few minutes partners can locate the main idea and a short time later find support for the main ideas. These supporting details reinforce the learner.

1. _____ Important idea

   a. support

   b. support

   c. support

Using the partnership approach even poor readers can be taught to interpret. Surely the poor reader will follow the lead of the partner at first. Later however the partner will resist doing all the work and encourage the poor reader to process print.

Summary

This paper has explored motivation to read and suggested activities which are helpful to assist readers to process print. Motivation is an internal construct, that is, it comes from within the individual. School aims can be set which direct and intensify the desire to learn on the part of the student. This paper raised various questions: What motivates students to read? What motivates students to continue to read? What motivates avoidance of reading? What motivates students to read in the content area? These questions were followed by several activities which promise to provide improved comprehension as students read in content areas.

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